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Chairperson: Mr. Metelitsas (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Belarus)

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In the absence of Ms. Ogwu (Nigeria), Mr. Metelitsa (Belarus), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 53: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*) (A/63/123 and A/C.2/63/3)

(a) Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (*continued*) (A/63/159 and A/63/190)

(b) Industrial development cooperation (*continued*) (A/63/309)

1. **Mr. Mac-Donald** (Suriname), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that there was still an unacceptable scale of poverty in the world owing to the inequitable distribution of economic, social and political opportunities. People living in poverty suffered constantly from a lack of food, the risk of disease and precarious working and living conditions. The eradication of poverty was therefore not only a key development goal but also a central human rights challenge.

2. While globalization could be a major force for combating poverty because of its immense capacity to create wealth, growth alone would not reduce poverty and income inequality. It was therefore important to have an equitable and fair trading system that promoted pro-poor growth strategies, maintained macroeconomic stability and enhanced agricultural productivity in an environmentally sustainable manner.

3. Women and young people in the Caribbean Community countries were particularly affected by their lack of access to or control over a variety of resources. They must therefore be mainstreamed into national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, and consulted in the policy development process. Inadequate socio-economic conditions in many countries had accelerated the feminization of poverty. In order for them to overcome poverty, women must also have equal access to full and productive employment and economic resources.

4. The global community, which already had the knowledge and the means to eradicate poverty, must display the political will to do so. Unfortunately, developing countries still had insufficient resources at their disposal to implement the national poverty eradication strategies needed to achieve sustainable development. The best way for developed countries to help them was therefore to provide meaningful debt relief, to fulfil their official development assistance (ODA) commitments and to remove their protectionist trade barriers.

5. Apart from Haiti, all CARICOM countries had been classified as middle-income countries on the basis of certain limited and arbitrary macroeconomic indicators, such as per capita income. However, that classification failed to take into account stark realities at the microeconomic level, including significant pockets of poverty. Furthermore, the graduation of CARICOM from concessionary financing had only served to exacerbate its financial situation. It was therefore important to support and not to undermine the poverty eradication efforts of CARICOM countries, particularly in the face of the various global crises which threatened to severely hamper their progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

6. **Mr. Nhleko** (Swaziland) said that his Government had adopted a Poverty Reduction Strategy Action Plan which aimed to reduce poverty in Swaziland by 50 per cent by 2015 and ultimately to eradicate it by 2022, thereby placing Swaziland among the top 10 middle-income developing countries on the human development index. While those targets appeared ambitious, they were achievable through the implementation of pro-poor programmes designed to enable the poor to share fully in economic growth and human development. Such programmes, combined with good governance, should lead to more equitable distribution of wealth and empower the poor to take advantage of the new opportunities available to them. That would require structural reforms, including the transformation of the agricultural sector. In that connection, his Government had organized an agricultural summit in August 2007 aimed at reorienting production systems to encourage sustainable agricultural production.

7. **Ms. Evelyn** (Saint Lucia) said that, while her country had made progress towards financing its own development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the global economic slowdown had increased the need for it to focus on self-sufficiency and to invest more in industrial development, especially in the case of small and medium-sized enterprises. However, those efforts were

being constrained by tariff and non-tariff barriers, inconsistent standards in cottage industries, insufficient resources for research, a lack of foreign direct investment and a limited internal market for product testing. The opportunity to use trade as an engine for development might also be further compromised by the failure of the Doha Round.

8. Saint Lucia could not achieve its industrial development goals without assistance from its development partners. Her Government therefore placed a high value on closer partnerships with other Governments and relevant stakeholders with a view to the expansion of its small-scale and cottage industries. The idea was not to rely on those partners, but rather to seek their assistance in laying the foundations for a modern economy which included a light-manufacturing base.

9. In the current economic climate, small businesses found it increasingly difficult to compete internationally. However, her Government viewed that dismal outlook as an opportunity to build national capacity. It was therefore assessing policies with a view to implementing a more pro-poor development strategy and fostering the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. Such efforts would require technical support, training and assistance from the international community. Access to cheaper renewable energy sources would also help small and medium-sized enterprises in her country, particularly those established by the poor.

10. South-South cooperation continued to be a significant component of Saint Lucia's approach to development. Lessons on how to improve low-technology industries could also be learned from North-South cooperation, which could create an enabling environment for more specialized small and medium-sized enterprises.

11. Saint Lucia aimed to improve the competitiveness of its industries through the technical assistance and advice provided by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). In that connection, it had put forward a project proposal to UNIDO requesting assistance with the transformation of the national economy. Her delegation hoped that Member States in a position to do so would lend their support to that project.

12. **Ms. Toutkhalian** (Armenia) said that her Government was deeply committed to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and had worked tirelessly over the past year to reduce poverty. Its pursuit of ambitious economic reforms had led to double-digit economic growth since 2002 and, consequently, to lower levels of poverty. Overall, globalization had also made lives better by opening up markets and creating opportunities that should help to reduce poverty.

13. However, poverty remained a significant problem in Armenia, where almost 25 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line. One of her Government's key objectives was therefore to reduce the poverty level to 11.2 per cent by 2012. In that connection, she noted the recent approval of her country's national poverty reduction strategy for the period 2008-2021, which was an essential component of Armenia's efforts to achieve sustainable development.

14. **Ms. Espinosa** (Ecuador) said that the global financial crisis had jeopardized the economies of developing countries and threatened to undermine the progress that they had made towards the eradication of poverty and the achievement of the MDGs. The crisis had called into question the foundations of a system that placed private interests before public interests and lacked any clear, independent or effective control and auditing mechanisms. Member States should therefore take steps to discuss how to establish a new and more transparent, democratic and equitable international financial architecture.

15. The Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus provided the ideal venue for developing and developed countries to reach agreements that could be directly beneficial to poverty eradication efforts. However, developed countries would also be expected to make a major commitment to meet their ODA objectives.

16. Her Government had made its own concerted effort to eradicate poverty through the establishment of a new Constitution and the elaboration of a National Development Plan for the period 2007-2010 whose objectives went beyond the minimum standards set by the MDGs. The Plan established a road map that changed the historical patterns of development and democracy in Ecuador. It included ambitious goals, such as the creation of a more equitable society that would guarantee stable, fair and dignified employment; access to a healthy and sustainable environment; and

the promotion of a supportive and sustainable economic system.

17. Over the past year Ecuador had established inclusive socio-economic policies and programmes and social investment in Ecuador had exceeded debt-servicing payments for the first time in 2007. A number of measures had been taken in order to achieve that objective, including channelling surplus oil earnings from the higher prices into productive credit, doubling the Human Development Bond, increasing the Housing Bond and substantially increasing investment in education and health.

18. **Ms. Loza** (Nicaragua) said that, in the current unjust international order based on a model developed and sustained by the slave trade, the exploitative capitalistic model had allowed the speculative activity of a minority to take the entire economy to the brink of global collapse. Hundreds of millions of people needed to be freed from the misery that it had caused.

19. The international community should therefore demonstrate the political will to completely restructure the international economic and financial architecture without delay. The incompetent and unfair policies of the international financial institutions had not only failed to prevent the economic and financial crisis but had also exacerbated poverty and hunger, thereby working against the achievement of the international development goals, including the MDGs. The food crisis, for example, had been compounded by the fact that developing countries had been told to manage their agricultural sectors on the basis of free-market principles, while farmers in developed countries benefited from State intervention in the form of massive subsidies. The pursuit of profit must not be the only economic goal; wealth distribution mechanisms should be established to achieve the economic and social development of all peoples.

20. To that end, Latin America was developing closer political, economic and social integration through the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas and the PetroCaribe initiative. That framework, based on equitable trade, was enabling her country to fight poverty, in particular by investing in social projects, primarily in the area of education, which was one of the main tools for poverty eradication.

21. Her country also wished to express its solidarity with the people of Cuba, denouncing once again the United States blockade against that country, which was in breach of international law.

22. **Mr. Ntwaagae** (Botswana) said that the major challenges still faced by Africa in its efforts to eradicate poverty called for urgent action at all levels. The strategies and priority lines of action needed to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development, as effectively analysed in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (A/62/267), must be pursued in an environment of peace, stability and good governance, which were prerequisites for sustainable development.

23. More coordinated actions were perhaps needed to address the complex and multidimensional aspects of sustainable poverty eradication in a way that more effectively responded to the specific characteristics of individual countries. In that connection, support from the donor community was critical for strengthening national capacities, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (A/63/190).

24. Since many of the African countries most in need of capital had often been bypassed by investors because of structural challenges and negative perceptions, the Doha Review Conference should focus on implementation of the recommendations of the MDG Africa Steering Group, as well as giving priority attention to the special needs of middle-income developing countries, such as Botswana, which had been denied ODA in the form of grants and concessionary funding. The multilateral trade negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) should also be urgently resumed, since there was a strong correlation between agricultural productivity and poverty in most developing countries in Africa.

25. The role of the private sector, including small and medium-sized enterprises and microenterprises, in alleviating poverty should be recognized and facilitated; the assistance of the international community would be particularly welcome in the area of access to microcredit. His delegation appreciated the analysis contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the role of microcredit and microfinance in the eradication of poverty (A/63/159); the information on the experiences of various countries could be particularly useful.

26. Bearing in mind that the ongoing global financial, food and energy crises could further exacerbate poverty, particularly in net food-importing developing countries such as Botswana, the challenge was to strengthen system-wide coherence within the United Nations system, foster global partnerships and develop innovative strategies to ensure that the Second Decade was meaningful and results-oriented.

27. **Mr. Douangchak** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) welcomed the launch of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, which, in order to support effectively the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, should generate greater momentum for global action towards poverty eradication. That would involve strengthening national ownership and the partnership between government, civil society and the private sector, aligning United Nations country programmes more closely with national development objectives, and meeting ODA commitments. The relevant United Nations agencies must also achieve greater coherence and effectiveness in their development activities.

28. Although the progress made by least developed countries and their development partners towards implementing the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 had in general been uneven, his country seemed relatively on track to meet the key targets, especially those relating to poverty and hunger, which were its priority. It had incorporated the MDGs and the Brussels Programme of Action targets into its sixth five-year socio-economic development plan and had established a number of priority programmes and projects to support the plan's implementation. Over the last decade, his country, with the strong commitment of its Government and supported by international donors, had seen a steady decline in the incidence of poverty, from 46 per cent in 1992 to 28.7 per cent in 2006.

29. Despite the progress made, the Lao People's Democratic Republic still faced various challenges, particularly in the areas of malnutrition, child and maternal mortality, and HIV/AIDS and other diseases. It would need greater coordinated financial and technical support from the international community to achieve further progress in the implementation of its national development goals and international commitments.

30. **Mr. Dagoh** (Togo) said that his country, aware of the importance of poverty eradication as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development and the effective preservation of national, regional and international peace and security, had in 2007 adopted a long-term development strategy based on the MDGs and had finalized its interim poverty reduction strategy paper, through which it intended to promote harmonious and swift development of the human capital needed for sustainable economic growth. His Government had undertaken major political, economic and administrative reforms that had led to the renewed engagement of development partners in Togo after several years' suspension of cooperation. The Togo Development Partners Conference held in Brussels in September 2008 had also given the country an opportunity to present its reforms and raise awareness among its partners in order to mobilize the external resources needed to reduce poverty and achieve the MDGs.

31. The Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) would fulfil expectations only if the international community met its development assistance commitments. Particular attention should be paid to microcredit and microfinance, which had a major role to play in reducing poverty and contributing to the socio-economic development process, as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/63/159). His delegation also shared the Secretary-General's assessment regarding the need for a dedicated inter-agency mechanism to address poverty reduction, and welcomed the conclusions and recommendations of his report on the implementation of the Second Decade (A/63/190). It hoped that a plan of action would be established to strengthen the social institutions and implement public policies necessary to generate development and ensure basic economic security for all in the face of growing employment insecurity.

32. **Mr. Baatar** (Mongolia), while acknowledging the achievements of the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, said that poverty eradication seemed to be a perennial issue for the international community, which therefore needed a clear vision of what it wanted to achieve by the end of the Second Decade. The experiences of countries that had succeeded in alleviating poverty showed the importance of addressing its underlying causes. Since access to even insignificant amounts of capital had

given many poor people the means to increase, diversify and protect their income sources, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report on the role of microcredit and microfinance in the eradication of poverty (A/63/159), the need to help the poor to help themselves should be the main lesson drawn from the First Decade.

33. Recognizing that unemployment and underemployment were the main sources of poverty and inequality, his country had made poverty reduction through economic growth and employment generation a key objective of its macroeconomic policy. It had also sought to ensure that the benefits of rapid economic growth were fairly distributed by undertaking quick-impact measures on poverty reduction and income generation, including raising salaries in the public sector, providing a monthly allowance to every child in the country and encouraging the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as promoting technical and vocational education.

34. A substantial increase in development assistance continued to be needed to achieve a drastic reduction in poverty in poor countries. It was also worrying that market access for most developing countries was still little improved. Both developing and developed countries therefore needed to redouble their poverty eradication efforts. In that connection, his delegation also welcomed the Secretary-General's assessment of the need for a dedicated inter-agency mechanism to develop, support and monitor the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

35. **Mr. Patriota** (Brazil) said that poverty eradication meant fighting exclusion and poverty as well as championing social justice and sustainable development. It was ethically unacceptable that more than 800 million people still suffered from hunger in a world that produced so much wealth. Eradicating poverty was therefore one of the top priorities of Brazil's political agenda.

36. There was no silver bullet to overcome poverty and hunger. National governments, international organizations and civil society should act in a coordinated manner on different fronts. While developing countries should continue to receive support through foreign debt relief, affordable and productive investment flows, increased international aid and innovative financial mechanisms, the international community should also commit to real international trade liberalization, allowing for a timely, development-oriented outcome of the Doha Development Round. At the same time, developing countries should seek to apply their resources as effectively as possible, giving priority to social programmes aimed at lifting their populations from poverty. His Government had achieved considerable progress in that regard by implementing successful programmes that had boosted the labour market as well as improving education levels and health coverage for poor families. Since the launch of the MDGs, his country had reduced extreme poverty by more than 60 per cent. Alongside its successful domestic policies, Brazil had also increased South-South cooperation through projects involving capacity-building and technology transfer to African and Latin American countries in a number of areas, including agriculture.

37. His delegation would like to see an enhancement of the United Nations development agenda. In that connection, it welcomed the recommendation contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/63/190) for a pragmatic plan of action in support of the Second Decade and wanted the mandates and goals of the United Nations development system to be more closely aligned with the challenges of eradicating poverty and hunger and promoting sustainable development. The opportunity provided by the Doha Review Conference to advance discussions on all dimensions of poverty eradication, including its economic and financial aspects, should not be wasted.

38. **Ms. Sahussarungsi** (Thailand) said that poverty involved not merely absence of money, but also lack of access to education, health care, employment, and opportunities for political, social and economic participation. Microcredit, while providing opportunities for many, often either excluded the very poorest or ran the risk of leaving them overly indebted, and efforts to promote microfinance should be accompanied by strategies to boost household income and savings. Her Government had implemented programmes to encourage community ownership of income-generating activities and production of uniquely local handicrafts that met international standards. Poverty reduction programmes also needed to address issues of rights, dignity and the empowerment of women.

39. Her delegation appreciated the work of United Nations agencies and the international financial institutions in creating partnerships among international, governmental, non-governmental and private stakeholders. Developed countries must fulfil their development assistance pledges, while developing countries needed to honour their commitments to transparency and sound economic policies. International trade offered another way out of poverty for developing countries, and she urged WTO member States to display the flexibility and political will necessary for an early conclusion to the Doha Round. South-South cooperation was an important complement to continued North-South cooperation, and the United Nations was an excellent forum for sharing lessons learned in that regard.

40. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan) said that unfortunately the recent World Bank estimates showing that poverty was more widespread than previously believed had validated the rationale for a Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, which should focus on coordination between national strategies and international anti-poverty programmes such as those administered by United Nations agencies. His country was situated in a region that was home to half of the world's 1.4 billion people living in absolute poverty. As a net food and energy importer, it was among the countries most affected by both poverty in general and the recent global crises in particular, and was faced with the challenge of not only alleviating already existing poverty but also preventing millions more of its citizens from falling below the poverty line. It had mandated minimum anti-poverty budget outlays by law, and its poverty reduction strategy had lifted 13 million people out of poverty. Nevertheless, the global crises threatened to reverse that positive trajectory as well as progress made in many of the MDG indicators. Global poverty eradication strategies should focus on promoting foreign direct investment, monitoring implementation of the internationally agreed development goals under United Nations auspices, creating new sources of financing in addition to ODA, and rectifying the market mechanisms that had generated hikes in food and oil prices.

41. **Ms. Cavalieri** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) observed that a new crisis, this one financial, had deepened the persistent systemic crisis in the capitalist system, affecting the most vulnerable, those living in poverty and even those who had not originally been poor but had been made poor by the catastrophe. It was vital to overcome the speculation, the selfishness and the profit motive inherent in the capitalist model and to move towards societies based on values such as equity, social justice, solidarity and respect for human rights. Poverty could not be overcome within the framework of capitalism; on the contrary, that model perpetuated the scourge of poverty.

42. Poverty elimination was the foundation of her Government's social development policy, which followed a model of economic and social development that placed the human being at the centre of State concern and action. Based on that completely new model and on a vision of solidarity and social justice, the Government had created an effective administrative structure to eliminate poverty, through a number of social programmes whose purpose was to pay off the social debt owed to Venezuelans who in the past had been the victims of social exclusion. With that policy, Venezuela had made significant progress in the fight against poverty: between 1998 and 2007, the portion of the population living in poverty had gone down from 44 per cent to 28.5 per cent, and the portion in extreme poverty from 17 per cent to just under 10 per cent. Thus Venezuela had succeeded, well ahead of schedule, in achieving the target of overcoming extreme poverty set in the Millennium Declaration. It had also achieved similar improvements in areas such as infant mortality, education, decentralization of government, and citizen participation. All such improvements would, in the final analysis, also contribute to the eradication of poverty.

43. The report on implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (A/63/190) suggested a plan of action in support of the Second Decade. Such a plan should not be limited to the follow-up activities to the 2005 World Summit but should also cover the Millennium Summit, at which a new consensus had emerged on the fight against poverty. However, in recent years the financial assistance promised or provided by the great majority of the developed countries had been declining. Of even more concern was the possibility that the current financial crisis could be used as an excuse for the developed countries to continue evading their commitments. That crisis must not impact the efforts of the developing countries to combat poverty by making them bear the costs of a crisis that they in no sense had

caused, either wholly or in part. The General Assembly should convene a special high-level meeting on the topic of poverty eradication, to be held in 2010.

44. With reference to the report of the Secretary-General on the role of microcredit and microfinance in the eradication of poverty (A/63/159), her delegation agreed that such mechanisms were important. As part of its policy on empowerment of women, the Government had established the Women's Bank, which by July 2008 had granted more than 100,000 loans, benefiting two million people and assisting in the creation of more than 400,000 new jobs.

45. **Mr. Fouda Tsilla** (Cameroon) said that, in deciding to proclaim a Second Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, the United Nations was confirming the central importance of the matter in the agenda of the international community. However, Cameroon was concerned to note that the portion of the United Nations budget allocated to development activities had dropped from 21.8 percent in 1998-1999 to 17.8 per cent in 2008-2009. Furthermore, the Secretary-General's proposals currently under discussion in the Fifth Committee would increase development expenditure to no more than 18.2 per cent, a level lower than ten years earlier. The present discussion, therefore, offered an opportunity to stress the need for allocation of resources commensurate with the objectives.

46. Since no dedicated inter-agency mechanism currently existed to address poverty, Cameroon welcomed the proposal that the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs might lead the efforts and serve as the coordinator for the Second Decade. However, that new function should be accompanied by suitable resources.

47. The Second Decade would be successful only if all stakeholders honoured their commitments with regard to financing, and ODA in particular. The Doha Conference was of particular importance. Cameroon hoped that the current financial crisis would not jeopardize the efforts of the South countries by making the rich countries unwilling to provide development assistance. The outcome of the Second Decade would also depend on three other conditions: application of the principles underlying the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, establishment of a more equitable trading system and adoption by the developing countries themselves of realistic policies and programmes.

48. In the case of Cameroon, the end of the First Decade for the Elimination of Poverty had coincided with the adoption of a national anti-poverty policy. Another milestone had been the cancellation of major amounts of external debt by the country's main creditors. The savings in debt servicing had enabled the Government to spend more on improving the living conditions of its population, and in particular to bring the portion of the population living below the poverty threshold down from 53 per cent in 1996 to just under 40 per cent in 2007. In particular, the Government was concentrating on three vulnerable groups: women, rural people and young people. Despite all those efforts, more would still be needed, particularly in view of the crises in the world of finance, in food security and in energy supply. The Second Decade for the Eradication of Poverty was thus of vital importance.

49. **Mr. Seyoum** (Eritrea) said that poverty eradication could not be discussed in isolation from the MDGs, and that the recent crises should not divert attention from their achievement. The problem was not lack of resources but lack of political will and adequate institutional architecture. His country's first national Millennium Development Report showed that it was on track to achieve all the Goals except eradication of extreme poverty and achievement of universal primary education. Its success was due to enormous expenditure of financial and human capital, and he appealed to the international community for financial assistance for his Government to continue its efforts. Politics should not stand in the way a genuine partnership between rich and poor to realize dreams for the future that all people shared.

50. **Mr. Alahraf** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the countries of sub-Saharan Africa were among those most affected by the recent rise in poverty, and were in need of greater assistance and increased investment to meet the challenge. The United Nations had an important role to play in preventing the recent financial crisis from bringing about reductions in already declining ODA and encouraging the international financial institutions to support poverty eradication programmes. External debt reduction, effective use of microfinance, investment in agriculture, economic diversification, and the creation of job opportunities were key to reducing poverty. Concerted efforts were also needed to combat HIV/AIDS, which had taken a

heavy toll on the productivity of the labour force in Africa in particular, and to assist the developing and least developed countries in confronting natural disasters. His country had launched initiatives to support agriculture, fight hunger and help women and children in the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States and throughout Africa and, with Nigeria and Cuba, had financed a South-South health care programme for African countries with insufficient health services. It supported African Union policies designed to promote continental integration through joint investment, and encouraged its private citizens to increase their investments in Africa.

51. **Mr. Kalilangwe** (Malawi) welcomed the proclamation of the Second Decade for the Eradication of Poverty as a reminder that the struggle to eradicate poverty was far from over. Eradication of poverty and hunger was a central theme of the Malawi Growth Development Strategy.

52. Agriculture was the main source of livelihood for the majority of rural people of Malawi, who accounted for more than 85 per cent of the population. In response to fluctuations in agricultural production, the Government had been implementing an agriculture input subsidy programme targeted at poor smallholders in order to achieve national food and nutrition security, and also planned to diversify agricultural production and encourage investment in the agriculture sector. It had adopted a number of pro-poor programmes and established the Malawi Rural Development Fund, which targeted women and young people and empowered them to set up small businesses.

53. Although Malawi was making reasonable progress in implementing those programmes, tangible results would be reached only through international mobilization of aid, trade, investment and debt relief. Malawi called once again on the industrialized countries to fulfil their ODA pledges to developing countries and to facilitate an early resumption and conclusion of the Doha Development Round. The fight against poverty in developing countries was also being seriously hampered by the adverse effects of climate change. Therefore, in line with the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities", Malawi called on those responsible for the emission of greenhouse gases to assist developing countries with appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures.

54. **Mr. Chitsaz** (Islamic Republic of Iran) noted that, while some parts of the world had been successful in poverty eradication, many others were unfortunately far behind their poverty reduction targets. What was needed was political will, otherwise any number of Decades could pass without real progress.

55. His country agreed with the Secretary-General on the need for a better understanding of the nature and range of the deep-rooted obstacles to poverty reduction. It had been successful in reducing extreme poverty, with the result that the main remaining challenge was to reduce the small portion (8.99 per cent) of the population living below the food poverty line.

56. Since the developed countries had failed to make the desired macro-policy adjustments in the realm of trade, money, finance, and external indebtedness, the problem of poverty persisted and had even become more severe. The international community had a responsibility to supplement the efforts being made by the developing countries themselves. A global economic environment was needed to promote growth and job creation in developing countries. Moreover, in countries that were experiencing serious difficulties in reducing poverty, support from the donor community was necessary for their national capacity-building programmes. The commitments of the First Decade had not been kept, but those of the Second Decade must be realized. Otherwise, inequalities would grow and poverty would continue to threaten the rights and dignity of people in all regions of the world.

57. The major Powers were depicting poverty as basically an internal problem of developing countries, because they wanted to divert attention from their policy failure to deliver at the macro level. Additionally, shifting from macro-level global action to the micro-dimensions of poverty enabled them to interfere in developing countries' domestic affairs and governance and apply conditionalities of all sorts.

58. An effective inter-agency mechanism within the United Nations was required to support and monitor the activities being implemented and encourage national ownership of the Second Decade. Major United Nations conferences such as the 2005 World Summit had provided useful inputs in that regard, and, the forthcoming Doha Review Conference would also be important. Without dedicated efforts to move towards genuine development and progress for all,

critical situations and economic slowdowns would undermine efforts to tackle poverty, and the end of the Second Decade would be reached without any satisfactory results having been achieved.

59. **Mr. Park** Kwang-suk (Republic of Korea) recalled that, while some progress had been made during the First Decade, the benefits were not evenly distributed and poverty continued to threaten almost all the regions of the world. In the light of the current multiple crises of high food and fuel prices, climate change and global financial instability, the situation could worsen in the Second Decade. In particular, the financial crisis might dry up the resources required to achieve development goals.

60. The Second Decade should bring the global community together to seriously pursue the objective of poverty eradication. As pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, the Second Decade should be seen as a framework for reflection and action to boost efforts aimed at achieving the internationally agreed development goals related to poverty eradication. Without proper support from the donor community, developing countries struggling to reduce poverty would not be able to achieve national capacity-building or to mobilize national resources.

61. Even though outside assistance could help developing countries jump-start their poverty reduction initiatives, primary responsibility for achieving poverty eradication lay with the country itself. National ownership and leadership were therefore critical to the success of the Second Decade. At the same time, there was a need to improve the institutional framework, with enhanced inter-agency coordination.

62. When developed and developing countries experienced economic turmoil, the burden fell on the poor. Even during the current economic difficulties, it was very important for the global community to maintain the necessary political momentum to assist the poor. From the long-term perspective, that was the way to ensure that every effort was being made to eradicate the scourges of poverty and hunger.

63. **Mr. Al-Sabah** (Kuwait) said that the eradication of poverty depended on speeding development in the developing and least developed countries, which in turn depended on good governance at the national level, transparency in the global financial system, and the fulfilment by developed countries of their development assistance commitments. He commended the pioneers of microcredit and urged that efforts be made to ensure that microfinance was available to the poorest of the poor, and in particular to women, who were overrepresented among the poor and had historically high repayment rates. Microfinance needed to be administered in a way that increased the access of the poor to credit while protecting them from potential abuses. In the almost half-century since it had gained independence, his country had provided over $12 billion in grants and loans to over 100 countries worldwide, and had dozens of domestic volunteer institutions and associations that assisted the needy.

64. **Mr. Dall'Oglio** (Permanent Observer for the International Organization for Migration) observed that well-managed migration could benefit poverty reduction in a number of ways. For example, worldwide, remittance flows in 2007 had been estimated at over $318 billion, of which developing countries had received $240 billion. While many observers took the view that remittances were mainly used for consumption and not for development purposes, consumption did contribute to the well-being of people who received them, and to a varying degree to the national economy as well. In sub-Saharan Africa, the International Organization for Migration, the Universal Postal Union and the Pan African Postal Union were implementing a pilot project aimed at improving and expanding remittance services to migrants and their families, in particular by reducing transfer costs and enhancing access to formal transfer services through local post offices.

65. Of course, remittances were ultimately private resources and could not be a substitute for ODA. Nor could they alter the structural causes of poverty, but they could provide stopgap relief to migrants' families if well-run institutional arrangements for money transfers at reasonable cost were in place. In addition, they could promote gender equality, in particular in situations where women were empowered by receiving remittances and being in control of household budgets and family property.

66. Recognition of the connection between migration and development was growing even though the MDGs and most government development policies, such as national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), did not systematically integrate migration considerations. However, since the 2006 High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, that had been gradually changing. The International Organization for Migration encouraged the

international community to continue improving the integration of migration into development policies and planning. To that end, it was working with a number of countries in mainstreaming migration into their PRSPs and was preparing a handbook to assist developing countries to do so.

67. In the current financial climate, issues related to migrants' salary levels and their impact on remittances, and the possible risks of an increase in discrimination and xenophobia against migrants, would need to be kept under close surveillance. While labour migration policies should remain flexible and responsive to changing circumstances, migrants must not be made the scapegoats for the present financial crisis.

68. **Ms. Filip** (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) welcomed the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and supported the recommendation of the Secretary-General concerning the need for an overall action theme for the Decade. The 118th IPU Assembly had been dedicated to the theme of pushing back the frontiers of poverty. During the debate, members of parliaments from both developed and developing countries had essentially agreed that, inter alia: poverty eradication should be seen as an act of solidarity rather than charity; emergency aid should not replace long-term planning; Governments had a responsibility to protect which could not be delegated to market mechanisms; and Africa deserved a special focus with respect to efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve the MDGs.

69. IPU members had expressed concern about the rise of relative poverty. Indeed, despite the increasing affluence in the world, there was growing inequality both within and among countries. The central question was therefore how to tackle absolute poverty in an environment of growing inequality. Another broader consideration was the extent to which poverty engendered war or conflict. An important way to combat poverty was thus to invest more in peacebuilding and democracy.

70. Employment creation was the key to eradicating poverty. To that end, more education, training and social services were needed, including increased efforts to prevent the social exclusion of marginalized groups and to empower women. National parliaments should be more involved in the process of reviewing poverty eradication strategies prior to their adoption, thereby ensuring full ownership of the strategies by the countries concerned.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.